WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Withdrawal of insurance cover

2924. SHRI INDRAMONI BORA: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH-EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that insurance cover has been withdrawn by Insurance Companies in Barak-Valley (three districts Silchar, Karimganj, Harilakandi) Dhubri and Lakhimpur revenue circle of Goalpara districts; and

(b) if so, whether he would take up the matter with Finance Minister so that insurance cover for the above districts is restored immediately?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) According to available information, Regional Inter-company Committee of Public Sector General Insurance have decided not to extend the basic fire policy/ house holders' policy/shopkeepers' comprehensive insurance policy etc. to cover the perils of floods and inundation in Barak Valley, Dhubri and Lakhipur revenue circle of Goalpara district in Assam in view of the heavy floods and inundation consistently experienced since 1989 resulting in loss of property in these areas. The occurrence of flood is a regular feature in these areas. However, the basic covers for fire and other risks excluding the perils of flood and inundation, continue to be offered by the Public Sector General Insurance Companies in these areas.

(b) As the decision has been taken on commercial considerations by the insurance companies directly, there is no proposals for taking up the matter with the Finance Minister at present.

Industrial Development of Assam

2925. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH-EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) the policy adopted to develop Assam in the industrial field;

(b) whether there is any new proposal to establish new industries in the State;

(c) whether there is any concrete proposal to open new commercial routes and improve the old ones with neighbouring countries of North-Eastern Region of the country; and

(d) the manner which Government propose to accelerate the mechanised cultivation in Assam to reduce the unemployment?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) and (b) An Industrial Policy and other concessions comprising schemes like (i) Growth Centre (ii) Transport Subsidy (iii) Capital Investment Subsidy (iv) Central Interest subsidy (v) Central Comprehensive Insurance (vi) Central Excise and Income-tax exemption have been notified for promotion of industry in the North Eastern Region, including the State of Assam, with a view to develop infrastructure facility and to promote investment in the North Eastern States. Infrastructure facilities like Export Promotion Industrial Park (EPIP) in Amingaon, Integrated Infrastructure Development Centres (IIDCs) at Dalgaon, Growth Centres at Balipara and Matia have been set up for promoting investment in Assam. North Eastern Development Finance Corporation (NEDFI) has successfully set up an IT Park in Guwahati, which is the largest Call Centre in Eastern India. NEDFI has been nominated as nodal agency for disbursement of Central subsidies under various Schemes like Central Investment Subsidy, Interest Subsidy.

(c) Bilateral trade issues are reviewed from time to time for improving commercial ties with the neighbouring countries. Border trade from Moreh (India) — Tamu (Myanmar) border points is conducted between the two countries under the Indo-Myanmar Border Trade Agreement signed in January, 1994. A Trade Centre has been constructed at Moreh to provide stalls for showroom-cum-sales counter to the local traders in addition to opening of import-export information cell, providing telecommunication facilities etc. A sum of Rs. 95 lakhs has been approved under the Critical Infrastructure Balance Scheme (CIBS) by the Ministry of Commerce

and Industry for the development of roads and streetlights at Moreh. The river Brahmaputra from Dhubri to Sadiya has been declared a National Highway. This waterway is connected to the ports Haldia and Kolkata by Inland Water Transport Route through Bangladesh. An inland water transit, a trade protocol between India and Bangladesh, exists under which inland vessels of two countries ply on the designated transit routes and between ports designated for inter-country trade. Under the Protocol, each country maintains the river routes falling within its territory in a navigable condition and provides all the essential pilotage and conservency services, including hydrographic surveys and supply of charts and also permits the vessels of the other country to utilise all available cranes and other handling facilities on the same terms and conditions as are applicable to local vessels. Border Roads Organisation has constructed the Tamu-Kalemyo Kalewa road (Indo-Myanmar Friendship Road) for facilitating border trade. At the Indo-Myanmar-Thailand Ministerial Meeting on Transport Linkages held on 5-6 April 2002 at Yangon, Myanmar, the Ministers agreed to develop and promote cooperation in multi-modal transport and other linkages, with a view to *inter-alia* enhance trade and investment so as to further contribute to the economic development of the three countries. The meeting also agreed on cooperation in the areas of construction of highway from Moreh to Mae Sot in Thailand through Myanmar, promotion of highway from Kanchanaburi in Thailand to Dawei deep sea port in Myanmar and shipping links to seaports in India; promotion of trade, investment and tourism through facilitation of movement of goods and peoples across borders. It was also decided in the Meeting that Cooperation shall include the participation of both private and public sectors as well as funding by countries, regional organisations and international financial institutions. Further, negotiations are also conducted under the aegis of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) for improving bilateral and regional trade and economic ties.

(d) Ministry of Agriculture has been taking the following measures for mechanisation of agriculture:

1. Assistance in the form of subsidy is available to the farmers on

various agricultural implements and machines under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Macro-Management of Agriculture. This Scheme is available to all the States, including the States in the North-Eastern Region.

2. The Government has set up a Farm Machinery Training and Testing Institute at Biswanath Chariali in the Sonitpur District in Assam to cater to the needs of the entire North-Eastern Region. The main objectives of this Institute are; (i) testing and performance evaluation of agricultural equipment with a view to improvement in their quality, durability and performance and (ii) human resource development through various training programmes, both institutional and on-site, for effective and optimum utilization of agricultural machinery. The training imparted by the Institute may help the trained unemployed rural youth in getting employment, including self-employment.

No Taker for ITDC Hotels

2926. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the proposed sale of ITDC hotels has no takers;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that ITDC has prepared a report on making the disinvestments attractive; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) No such report has been received from the India Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. (ITDC). The Department of Tourism has made certain suggestions including the following:—

(i) Manpower rationalisation in the hotel units of ITDC through introduction of voluntary retirement scheme.

(ii) To undertake the sale of Hotel Kanishka and Hotel Indraprastha as separate units.